



COMPTROLLER GENERAL OF THE UNITED STATES
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20548

September 17, 1976

B-1 8741

The Honorable Vance Hartke
Chairman, Committee on Veterans' Affairs
United States Senate



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Dear Mr. Chairman:

In your April 24, 1975, letter you requested that we determine whether the Veterans Administration (VA), State approving agencies, and participating schools were properly implementing certain provisions of the Vietnam Era Veterans' Readjustment Assistance Act of 1974, (Public Law 93-508)--specifically the 50 percent employment rule, the 85 percent enrollment rule, and the course character and advertising provisions.

We selected 13 schools for review--7 correspondence schools, 4 vocational/technical schools, and 2 flight schools. As you requested, we chose (1) correspondence schools which were the subject of our previous review of certain provisions of the Vietnam Era Veterans' Readjustment Assistance Act of 1972, (Public Law 92-540) 1/, (2) vocational/technical schools providing resident training, and (3) flight training schools. We selected these schools also because they had a variety of vocational courses and large veteran enrollment. We selected one course for review at each school. In general, these courses had a large veteran enrollment.

As discussed below and in the enclosure, we noted deficiencies in all provisions reviewed which limited VA's assurances that the act was being properly implemented. Since neither the 13 schools nor the 13 courses reviewed were statistically selected, the deficiencies noted cannot be considered representative of all courses affected by the act. However, because the deficiencies were due mostly to inadequate VA policy and guidelines the following may be common deficiencies:

--Some VA regional offices and State approving agencies did not process the schools' employment survey reports for the 50 percent rule as required.

1/Follow-up Work on Veterans Taking Correspondence Training (P-114859, June 5, 1974).

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They did not always (1) identify all schools and courses for which survey reports were required, (2) adhere to prescribed timeframes for processing reports, and (3) verify the mathematical accuracy of data on the reports. Also, the validity of several schools' surveys and their reporting was questionable.

--There was no clear definition of a VA subsidized student for purposes of computing the 85:15 ratio. Also, school officials were not certain whether it was their responsibility to make the ratio calculation and retain documentation to indicate their compliance with the rule.

--VA had no acceptable standard for determining whether a course was avocational or recreational, and in fact, the survey form seemed to discourage veterans from indicating that a course they took was for personal enrichment, avocational or recreational reasons. Also, neither VA nor State agencies systematically reviewed school advertising.

During our review, we discussed our findings with VA officials and in some instances corrective action was taken. We are recommending additional actions in this report to provide further assurance that the four provisions of the act discussed above are effectively implemented.

As discussed with your office, formal comments were not obtained from VA. However, this report has been discussed with VA officials, and their comments have been included as appropriate.

Also, as discussed with your office, copies of the report are being sent to the Administrator of Veterans Affairs, other Congressional Committees, Members of Congress, and other interested parties.

Sincerely yours,


ACTING Comptroller General
of the United States

Enclosure